

Reaching Out to Spanish Speaking Audiences

Serving Latino Communities Success Checklist

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/DisplayContent?id=11200>

Serving Latino communities requires that the entire library be behind the effort and that cultural awareness be integrated into every aspect of the library's services and operations.

How successfully has your library integrated cultural awareness of the Latino community? Ask a variety of staff, board members, volunteers and customers to rate your library's level of success using the Success Checklist below.

Have them mark each item with one of three ratings: L for low, M for medium or H for high).

Appoint a committee to discuss the ratings and brainstorm strategies for improving those items that did not receive high ratings.

Use the results of the checklist to develop a library services plan.

Planning: Services to Latino communities should be an integral part of all library planning efforts. The library's mission, goals and objectives should specifically address services to culturally diverse communities.

_____ Library director and library board are involved and committed to serving all segments of the community.

_____ Services to the Latino community are included in the library's long range/strategic plan.

_____ Library management and staff understand why serving the Latino community is important.

_____ Library staff are provided opportunities to learn about cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and customer service to the Latino community.

_____ Library staff across all departments and classifications involved in planning services to the Latino community.

_____ Library has revised existing policies and procedures that impact delivery of services to the Latino community.

Community Involvement/Connections: Effective libraries are heavily involved with their Latino communities. They make sure that Latino community representatives are involved in the design and evaluation of library activities.

- _____ Library staff meets with key Latino community leaders and groups, etc. on a regular basis to review and revise the service plan.
- _____ Library staff have identified P.R. activities with which key Latino community leaders and groups, etc. can assist.
- _____ Library staff have participated in one or more Latino community event.
- _____ Library staff have developed a list of current and potential Latino community partners and collaborators.
- _____ Library staff have developed a process for tracking Latino community connections made and a schedule for following up, staying in touch.
- _____ A schedule/process is in place for library staff to participate in Latino community events.

Facilitating Access/Signage and Welcoming Environment: Access to library services by Latinos includes delivery systems and bibliographic processes that reflect cultural and linguistic differences.

- _____ Spanish or bilingual city signage directs people to the library.
- _____ Spanish or bilingual signage on the exterior of the building is easily visible.
- _____ Spanish or bilingual signage welcomes people at or near the front door.
- _____ Culturally sensitive posters, art and displays help create a welcoming environment.
- _____ Spanish or bilingual signage is at the collection site as well as signage directing library customers to the collection.
- _____ Counter signage or nametags are used when bilingual staff is available (i.e., Se Habla Español).
- _____ Bilingual library forms, cards and brochures are available and prominently displayed.
- _____ Library is open at hours convenient to the Latino community.
- _____ Library provides Spanish language options for locating information (subject headings, bibliographies, book catalog, reading lists, bilingual web site).

Collection: The library's collection should provide materials in all formats and should reflect the needs, language and cultural preferences of Latino communities.

- _____ The collection is in an easily visible and accessible area of the library with seating available to encourage use of materials in the library.
- _____ A collection development policy specific to the Latino community has been written.
- _____ Alternative methods for accessing the collection are available (subject headings, bilingual materials catalog, bibliographies, book lists and website are bilingual).
- _____ Library has schedule/process in place for ongoing Latino community input to collection development.
- _____ Collection displays and materials are in areas where people gather.

Programs/Services Offered: Effective services to Latino communities must include a wide variety of programs that meet the specific needs and interest of the community.

- _____ Programs/activities are offered in the library (e.g., bilingual programs/assistance, use of meeting room space by Latino community groups)
- _____ Library programs/activities are offered in the community (e.g. library booth at Latino community events, visits to schools, speaking to Latino community groups)
- _____ Bilingual staff is available.
- _____ Staff is culturally responsive (e.g. eye contact, smiles, level of communications).
- _____ Additional activities of interest to the Latino community are available (other programs and/or grants).
- _____ Methods for tracking programs and number of attendees are in place.
- _____ Library participates in Latino community fairs, celebrations and civic forums.
- _____ Library delivers services in the community at Latino community centers (e.g. migrant camps, senior centers, etc.).
- _____ Library coordinates/collaborates library services/programs with other agencies working in the Latino community.
- _____ Library programs encourage/facilitate participation by members of the Latino community.
- _____ Library has schedule/process in place for ongoing Latino community input.



Internal Communications: Effective libraries make sure that staff, volunteers, Friends and Trustees are informed and/or involved in the design and implementation of library plans to serve Latinos.

- _____ Library staff, volunteers, Friends and Trustees are aware of the plan to serve Latinos and its impact on library services, staffing, promotion and budget.
- _____ Library staff, volunteers, Friends and Trustees have been asked for input on how to best to implement the plan.
- _____ Contributions and achievements of staff and volunteers in helping to establish and implement the plan have been recognized.

Staff Recruitment and Development: Effective libraries actively recruit staff at all levels that mirror the makeup of the community. They provide encouragement and opportunities for staff to develop and update skills in serving Latino communities.

- _____ A process for recruiting, training and mentoring bilingual community outreach staff is in place.
- _____ Scholarships to encourage staff from Latino backgrounds to take library science courses are available.
- _____ A schedule/process for providing cultural sensitivity training for all staff is in place.
- _____ A schedule/process for encouraging staff to participate in activities in the Latino community is in place.

Board Recruitment and Development: Effective libraries actively recruit board members who mirror the makeup of the community. They provide encouragement and opportunities for board members to develop and update skills in representing and serving Latino communities.

- _____ A process for recruiting board members who mirror the makeup of the community is in place.
- _____ A schedule for providing training that includes cultural sensitivity is in place.

Publicity and Media Relations: Effective libraries develop and maintain connections with key media contacts for the Latino community. They monitor the impact of their marketing activities to the Latino community.

- _____ Library staff have developed a thorough list of Spanish-language and Latino media contacts.
- _____ Library staff have met with each major Latino media contact at least once to begin the relationship.
- _____ Library staff, volunteers, Friends and Trustees are aware of promotional strategies in the Latino community.
- _____ Spanish language and bilingual press releases and PSAs have been developed.
- _____ The library website includes Spanish language and Latino culturally appropriate features.